



NEWS RELEASE

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THE BARRINGTON COMMUNITIES' COALITION FORMALLY OBJECTS TO CANADIAN NATIONAL ACQUISITION BY FILING WITH THE STB

(Barrington, IL) The Village of Barrington and eight other community villages and townships have filed a response with the U.S. Surface Transportation Board seeking its most comprehensive environmental review of Canadian National's proposed acquisition of the EJ&E Railway. The 17-page reply states, "...the transactions contemplated will have a foreseeable and significant impact on the environment and that in order to meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act the Surface Transportation Board must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in connection with its review of the application."

The STB has authority to approve or disapprove the CN acquisition, unless it finds the \$300 million purchase of the EJ&E Railway from U.S. Steel would reduce freight transportation competition. Therefore, the filing is calling for the agency to consider the adverse impact the increased train traffic would have on Barrington and the surrounding communities before making any ruling. These communities have come together to form the Barrington Communities Against CN Rail Congestion Coalition with the simple goal of defending the region's vital interests in the matter.

According to CN's application, Barrington will see more than 15 new trains per day, in addition to the 3-5 already on the line, which could back up traffic significantly, given the average train takes up to six minutes to pass a crossing. It also only counts changes in traffic for three years – starting at the end of 2006 and ignoring post-2006 new traffic and traffic from any new sources after three years.

"CN is counting on the ignorance and inaction of the communities affected by the acquisition," states Karen Darch, coalition spokesperson and Barrington Village president. "They were hoping this would be a done deal and that we would have no say in the matter. This region is committed to making CN and the STB understand that this is not the case."

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The coalition, which is made up of the Villages of Barrington, Barrington Hills, Lake Barrington, North Barrington, South Barrington, Tower Lakes, and Deer Park, along with Cuba and Barrington Townships launched a public advocacy campaign to engage residents in what has been called the “Battle of Barrington.”

“I believe this has become our community’s worst threat ever,” said David Nelson, Cuba Township supervisor and former Barrington Village president. “I believe that we are on a collision course that will be devastating to our people if we don’t receive help from the Canadian National Railway to rectify this situation.” Village Trustee Tim Roberts agreed, “We all have to get together and fight this fight—and we have to win.”

More than 300 homes in the community are within 300 feet of the EJ&E line. Schools, parks and ball fields are within yards of the line. So, safety is a paramount concern.

Fire chief Jim Arie says increased train traffic could be a matter of life or death for residents in the Greater Barrington Area in need of fire and emergency medical attention because the crossings bisect the village. The EJ&E line intersects at grade with routes 14 and 59, and Lake Cook, Lake Zurich, Ela, Cuba, Penny and Otis roads.

“Good Shepherd Hospital is our local hospital,” explains Arie. “If a patient or victim gets stopped on the wrong side of the tracks, they would have to go to Northwestern Community Hospital in Arlington Heights or Alexian Hospital in Hoffman Estates. Those extra minutes could be catastrophic.”

Another way it affects the region, explained Brian Battle, president of the District 220 school board, is how many times school buses go over the EJ&E track. When he called to ask the Barrington Transportation Company, he was told school buses cross the track 370-400 times a day. Consequently, buses that would have to stop for passing trains would have a domino effect on travel times and safety.

CN concedes the Barrington area would be the most impacted on the EJ&E line.

“Our response to the STB lets CN know the Barrington area communities will be actively involved in the agency’s consideration of its application,” explains Darch.

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